



Show Me Your Ways Through Fellowship (Philippians 2:1-4)

Don't you just love to open your mailbox and find a good old-fashioned letter from a friend or loved one? Knowing that someone took the time to let you know they were thinking of you and that they care for you is nourishing to the soul! This study centers on just such a letter. The book of Philippians is a letter from Paul to the Christians at Philippi. Paul was in a Roman

prison at the time he wrote and sent this letter to those at Philippi. It was a letter in which he expressed his love, affection, and appreciation to the Philippian believers.

In this bible study we will focus on Philippians 2:1-4. In this passage, Paul is recalling their life as a community formed by the Gospel. He is affirming their faith and is calling them to progress forward, to build and mature upon their faith and life experiences. Paul, knowing that a strong fellowship lays the foundation to build an even stronger community, encouraged them to have spiritual unity.

Fellowship literally means to hold things in common. It is about relationships and the care and concern we hold for one another. The church at Philippi, much like our own congregations, spent time together, ate meals with together, and took care of each other when needs arose. They became a family. They embodied the spiritual gift of fellowship of which Paul called them to embrace.

When we read this section of Philippians, are we not called to embrace this spiritual gift as well? Paul encourages us to love one another and to be one in spirit and purpose so that we can work together and care for others as Christ calls us to do. Building relationships with those around us is important for this task. It is crucial that we invest time and prayer into our fellowship endeavors. When we gather, we each bring a unique background with us - some are wealthy and some are not; some are healthy and others struggle with illness; some are filled with the Holy Spirit while some are desperately searching. It is at these crossroads where fellowship, showing genuine concern and interest in others, finding common ground in our faith, is crucial. As we spend quality time with each other, we naturally discover one another's needs. As we come to know one another through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the love of Christ will then compel us to love and care for each other in practical ways.

Discussion Questions and Reflection Activities

How can we create fellowship? Fellowship tends to thrive when we as Christians live in a worthy manner. When we behave in ways that honor Christ we naturally draw near to one another. When we treat people with the love that Christ calls us to show, fellowship blossoms.

1. Discuss ways that your congregation seeks fellowship? How can we enhance these experiences to strive to reach the fellowship of which Paul speaks?
2. How can your CP Women's Ministry further promote fellowship within your church and community?

Possible Activities

Consider taking on a letter campaign. One of our tasks as Christians is to encourage our fellow Christians in their ministry and fellowship endeavors. There are so many opportunities in which letter writing can fulfill this need.

- Write to **other CP Women's Ministry's** throughout your presbytery, synod, and even on the denominational level. Share with one another the news and goings on of your chapter, encourage each other, share ideas, and pray for one another. This promotes fellowship and unity within our ministry as a whole.
- Write to **our missionaries**. Encourage them in their work. Pray for them. Share with them the joy you experience in your fellowship at home, and rejoice with them in their experiences where they are.
- Write to the **residents and employees at the Cumberland Presbyterian Children's Home** in Denton, Texas. Let the residents know that there are other Christians who pray for them on a daily basis. Lift up the employees in prayer as they give daily doses of guidance and encouragement to those who often feel lost and hopeless.
- Write letters to the **youth** of your congregation. Get to know them on a personal level, encouraging them in their faith journey.
- Write to those within your **congregation and community that are no longer able to be active** in the church and community. Let them know of your love and concern for them. Remind them that even though they can't always be present in the room with you, they are an important and crucial part of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within your community.

Using the word **FELLOWSHIP**, write an acrostic poem that helps define the word in the context of our lesson for today.

Prayer:

Have a member of your group close with prayer, seeking to find ways to renew and encourage the fellowship of the Holy Spirit within your church and community.